

Houston Planning Commission

Urban Subcommittee Wednesday, August 17, 2005 Summary

Attendance:

Barbara Tennant, Carla Wyatt, Guy Hagstette, James L. (Jim) Wallace, M. Marvin Katz, Mary Lou Henry, Paul Charles, Reeves Gilmore, Richard Farias, Steve Flippo, Thomas Colbert, Roberta Burroughs, Damon Williams, Catherine Burst

Handouts

Performance Standards Concept (Attachment B)

Discussion:

Urban Design/ Performance Standards – Slide Show (see hand out)

- Mitigation effects of incompatible land uses i.e. Landscape buffers, lighting schemes, urban parking solutions.
- Would be implemented uniformly throughout City.
- Degree to which standards are implemented would vary according to the proportion of single family residential land uses on a block.
- If block is less than 50% single family, performance standards do not apply.

Issues:

- Would different rules apply to different uses? i.e. Gas Stations treated one way, bakeries treated another?
- This favors single family development- doesn't address commercial areas experiencing encroachment from residential uses.
- Small businesses would be impacted the most economically
- How will this fit with townhouses?
- Lots may not be best method for calculating residential proportions
- Performance standards would protect the status quo rather than acting on a plan.
- Or, not protecting status quo, but making existing development more friendly.
- Decision making regarding what area needs protection may occur during Transit Corridor Planning.

Areas of Consensus:

- Test areas should not cross economic corridors
- Must get input from communities before moving forward
- Retaining suburban character in some urban neighborhoods may be appropriate and desirable.
- Trip generation and height should be considered.
- Ensuring maintenance of landscaping is a big issue. Current rules are ineffective for the life of the project.

Co-Committee Activity

- Agreement to share communication between Urban Committee with Neighborhood Preservation:
Barbara Tennant
Ron
Tom Colbert
Mary Lou Henry
Catherine Burst
Paul Charles

Transit Corridor Planning

- Agreement to allow new smart growth grants/funding for studies under Guy H. to be presented and reviewed by Urban Planning Committee.
- Test transit corridor concepts using real world examples.

Definition of Houston's "URBAN?"

- Ongoing question and thought of how committee should view Houston's urban spaces.
- Should there be a concise statement to redefine and not limited to inner loop 610 developments?
 - Key terms include:
density, history (pre/post WWII), urban core, urban nodes, dense districts, tight street grids, commercial revenue sources, etc.
- Urban is defined by a set of development pressures being applied in a situation. It's less about geography than a lot of situations- where and when are these most likely to occur?
- Is there a need for 'super urban' designation?

See attachment: CongressNewUrbanismCharter.pdf

Next Meeting: September 28